

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTO 03422 221128Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SS-15
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O R 212230Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5067
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: THIRD DAY OF ELECTORAL BOARD HEARINGS

REFS: A. SANTO DOMINGO 3359, B. SANTO DOMINGO 3329,
C. SANTO DOMINGO 3355

1. THE HEARINGS BY THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (JCE) ON REFORMISTA CHALLENGES TO THE ELECTORAL RESULTS OF MAY 16 CONTINUED JUNE 21. TO DATE THEHOJCE HAS HEARD CHALLENGES TO THE RESULTS IN 30 MUNICIPALITIES, WITH 16 MORE TO FOLLOW. ABSENT AT THE HEARINGS TODAY WERE THE DECORUM AND COURTESY THAT HAD CHARACTERIZED THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF HEARINGS (REFS A AND B). THE DEBATES TURNED INTO AN UGLY POLITICAL CONFRONTATION WITH REFORMISTAS AND PRD TRADING CHARGES AND ACCUSATIONS.

2. THE TONE WAS SET BY REFORMISTA LEGAL EXPERT "VINCHO" CASTILLO. AFTER REPEATING HIS USUAL ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF "COMPLEMENTARY ELECTIONS", CASTILLO LAUNCHED A BLISTERING ATTACK ON PRD SECGEN PENA GOMEZ. THE PRD SECGEN HAD ACCUSED CASTILLO THE DAY BEFORE OF TAKING PART IN THE WEEKEND BREA IN INTO JCE HEADQUARTERS IN WHICH A NUMBER OF VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS AND DOCUMENTS WERE STOLEN
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(REF C).

3. CASTILLO PRODUCED A TAPE RECORDER AND BEGAN TO PALY A TAPED TELEPHOONE CONVERSATION OF MAY 23. AT THIS POINT JCE INTERIM CHAIRMAN HUGO VARGAS SUBERVI ASKED CASTILLO NOT TO PLAY THE TAPE AT THE HEARINGS, THAT HE COULD SUBMIT IT TO THE COMMISSION LATER. CASTILLO AGREED, BUT READ THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE

CONVERSATION ANYWAY. THE CONVERSATION WAS BETWEEN PRD PARTY PRESIDENT AND REPRESENTATIVE AT THE JCE HEARINGS SALVADOR JORGE BLANCO AND A MR MARCANO. THE MAIN REFORMISTA ACCUSATION BASED ON THE TAPE COMES FROM THE PORTION IN WHICH MARCANO TELLS JORGE THAT THEY MUST GET IN TOUCH WITH THEIR "KEY CONTACT" IN THE JCE IN ORDER TO PREVENT A PLOT BY REFORMISTAS TO HAVE THEMSELVES DECLARED WINNERS OF NAGUA PROVINCE (WHERE THE PRD WON). CASTILLO SAID THAT THE "KEY CONTACT" REFERRED TO IN THE CONVERSATION IS FELIPE CABRERA FEBRILLET, THE JCE COMPUTER EXPERT WHO WAS DETAINED BY POLICE APPARENTLY ON GROUNDS THAT THE JCE COMPUTERIZED REGISTRATION LISTS WERE MANIPULATED TO PREVENT REFORMISTA VOTERS FROM EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE ON MAY 16.

4. NEXT IT WAS SALVADOR JORGE BLANCO'S TURN TO SPEAK, AND HE DEPLORED THE FACT THAT THE REFORMISTAS HAD STOOPED SO LOW AS TO USE PHONE TAPS. DECLARING THAT "PRIVACY NO LONGER EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY," JORGE, NEVERTHELESS, EXPLAINED THE PHONE CONVERSATION. THE MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE JCE IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 17 HAD PLACED THE PRD "ON THE ALERT" AND FORCED PRD LEADERS TO JEALOUSLY GUARD THEIR VOTE TOTALS; THIS IS WHAT THE CONVERSATION WITH MARCANO HAD BEEN ABOUT. AFTER MORE CHARGES WERE TRADED, THE JCE ADJOURNED UNTIL TOMORROW, WHEN THE LAST 16 CHALLENGES WILL BE CONSIDERED.
YOST

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